

THE EFFECT OF IMMIGRATION REFORM ON HISPANIC ADVOCACY  
GROUPS

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The Effect of Immigration Reform on Hispanic Advocacy Groups

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## ABSTRACT

Recent immigration reform has caused a controversy over the implementation of proposed reform in the past two years. Arizona's attempt to pass strict immigration reform triggered an outpouring of advocacy activity among groups nationwide.

This movement is not the first time groups have mobilized against immigration reform on both the federal and state levels. Texas is on the verge of a significant state attempt to pass immigration reform, which has sparked initial reactions similar to those seen in Arizona in 2010.

This study examines how Hispanic advocacy groups are responding to these policy reforms. In the process I examine how these selected groups explain these policies to the public, how their patterns of activities are altered, and whether the reform is driving an increase in Hispanic community activism.

Using a semi-structured interview method I provide evidence that Hispanic advocacy groups see immigration reform in the state of Texas as an opportunity to rally and combine forces, the opportunities to increase membership is not clear. However, these groups believe that the political opportunity provided by immigration reform will give them a platform to increase their influence on policy-makers.

This abstract accurately represents the content of the candidate's thesis. I recommend its publication.

Signed

Paul Stretesky, PhD

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my loving wife, Amy; son, Ari; and parents, Dennis and Bertha. Without their support, understanding, and sacrifices my pursuit of higher education and completion of this thesis would not have been possible.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Calls for immigration regulation and reform have persisted throughout U.S. history. Hostility toward immigrants began early in America when settlers rejected a second wave of immigrants. In the United States, racism is often noted by scholars as a contributing factor in shaping immigration legislation (Burden, 2007; Eschbach & Waters, 1995; Finch, 1990; Lee, 2002). For instance, as early as 1882 racially driven immigration legislation was created to limit Chinese labor (Lee, 2002). The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 restricted the ability of Chinese immigrants to work in the United States and barred any court from granting citizenship to a person of Chinese descent. The Act was unpopular among the public and was eventually deemed racially insensitive and overturned in 1943 by the Magnuson Act,<sup>1</sup> setting in motion a

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<sup>1</sup> The Magnuson Act permitted Chinese immigrants residing in the United States to become citizens and provided a national quota of 105 Chinese immigrants per year. Large-scale Chinese immigration did not take place until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.

path to citizenship for Chinese immigrants. Such a path has often been regarded as a priority for any comprehensive immigration legislation.

After repealing the Chinese Exclusion Act, the United States again attempted to restrict the type of immigrants that came to the United States by passing a series of federal acts that restricted several immigrant groups, including Hispanics and the Japanese,<sup>2</sup> from entering the country legally. In addition to these groups, criminals too were never welcome, but the United States began to accept a "better class" of immigrants. The issue was there was no way to know who the solid citizens were. Throughout U.S. history political or social prejudice against certain races or nationalities would partly determine who was thought to be a criminal. Early on, any Central European was suspected, and then Eastern Europeans. In the early 1900s suspicion shifted to Asians, namely the Japanese and Chinese, and in the mid-twentieth century Hispanics. Currently Hispanics and Middle Easterners are receiving this attention.

Throughout United States history persons judged to be productive by supplementing the labor force were allowed to immigrate.<sup>3</sup> For instance acts

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<sup>2</sup> Acts include the Page Act of 1875, the Naturalization Act of 1870, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Immigration Act of 1882, the Geary Act of 1892, the Immigration Act of 1917, and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.

<sup>3</sup> Economics has played a key role in immigration reform. Settlers allowed immigration due to the need for cheap manual labor. The same concept has persisted throughout the United States' history. Even today immigration reform is discussed in the context of how restricting access to Hispanic immigrants will affect the United States agriculture industry.

such as quota acts allowed for states such as California, with its Bracero Act of 1942, to accept immigrants who would supplement the work force in areas whose working populations were low, often taking agricultural jobs that citizens were less likely to perform.<sup>4</sup>

The decision to enact strict immigration legislation began, for the Hispanic population, in the 1940s. During the sixty years since, Hispanic immigrants have watched as a number of legislative acts have been passed that restrict their ability to seek refuge or their fortune in the United States. While federal and state governments were looking for ways to restrict Hispanic immigration, persons from Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America were continuing to enter the United States and integrate into the workforce, especially in manual labor and agricultural trades (Crawford, Meade, Spiller & Stamper, 2004).

California's Bracero Act of 1942 restricted employers to contracting with only two million immigrants. Although those immigrants fought to stay in the country, despite the legislation a large number were deported. Congress attempted to curb the flow of immigrants in 1986 with the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). Using sanctions on employers, the United States

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<sup>4</sup> One example of a quota act is the Emergency Quota Act of 1921.

attempted to stem the flow of illegal immigrants seeking work in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

Beginning with President Ronald Reagan, the United States government has sought to develop programs providing paths to citizenship. Presidents George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush have upheld this concept, which aims to provide law-abiding and taxpaying immigrants the opportunity and education to become United States citizens.

These immigration policies have sparked a number of Hispanic organizations to incorporate advocacy for just, comprehensive reform into their groups' platforms. That fight has been at the forefront of many national organizations' agendas for the past forty years (NCLR representative, 2010). With states queuing to present and pass immigration reform, the fight for influence in the policy process regarding immigration reform is a pressing issue for national and local groups (NCLR representative, 2010).

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<sup>5</sup> It is very important to understand how the term "illegal immigrant" is used. In many cases, among both the Hispanic population and the general public, illegal immigrants are the targets of those wanting immigration reform. The problem arises when legal immigrants are confused with their unauthorized counterparts, or are made the collateral damage in the pursuit of stringent reform of illegal immigration. This is an aspect that I am not able to examine fully in this thesis, but it is a point of interest.

## 1.2 Issue

While immigration reform has been unsuccessful, the implementation of workers' rights, along with a failing economy and stricter employment and deportation laws, has caused unauthorized or illegal immigration at the national level to stabilize (NALEO research project, 2010). Despite the fact that the number of illegal immigrants in the United States dropped from 12 million in 2007 to 11.2 million in 2010 (Cohn & Passel, 2011), the federal government has come under pressure from community, state, and local governments to address the issue, especially in the southwest where Texas, Nevada, New Mexico, California, and Colorado have experienced an increase in illegal immigrants (Cohn & Passel, 2011).

With the importance of illegal immigration varying from state to state, recent calls for national comprehensive immigration reform have gone unanswered. The lack of a nationwide public mandate may deter the federal government from concentrating on immigration, but public opinion in the southwest is different. Given that region's proximity to Mexico and Latin America, immigration is a hot-button topic in Texas, Nevada, Arizona, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and California. Groups advocating against immigration believe that these states are being forced to create expensive social welfare programs because of illegal immigrants.

States in the southwest are now taking matters into their own hands and creating legislation that attempts to restrict illegal immigration. Arizona was the first state to take notable action, introducing Senate Bill (SB) 1070, which imposed restrictions regarding immigrant IDs and granted law enforcement officials the right to detain and question those suspected of being illegal immigrants. Nevada and Texas have followed suit, with similar laws being proposed in both states. However, sweeping change has been met with disdain, as evidenced by the response to Arizona's attempt to pass its recent immigration reform.

The call for immigration reform has increased in the past decade. As the number of immigrants has risen, the public has pressured the government to provide legislation to regulate entry into the country. In a May 2010 Gallup poll 68 percent of those asked said that halting illegal immigration was "very important" or "extremely important."<sup>6</sup> In the same poll 67 percent felt the same way about developing a plan to deal with illegal immigrants currently residing in the United States. In June 2010, a Gallup poll placed immigration reform as one of the top six policy issues facing the nation.<sup>7</sup>

The trend holds true among Hispanics. Garcia Research and Santiago ROI conducted the LatinoMetrics research project (Latino Metrics Study, 2010). The study polled 504 Latinos randomly selected from across the

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix B.

country about immigration reform and Arizona SB 1070 in May and June of 2010.<sup>8</sup> The results align with those of Gallup a poll indicating that immigration reform is an important policy issue facing the nation, and that 78 percent of Latinos believe that immigration reform is “very important.”<sup>9</sup> The differences emerge upon consideration of what immigration reform should address.

In the Gallup polling referenced above, the respondents believed that reform should address immigrants currently in the United States, along with the tightening of the nation’s borders. From this research it is safe to assume that immigration reform that promotes tougher sanctions on current immigrants, such as those included in Arizona SB 1070, and that protects the border, falls in line with the opinions expressed by the Gallup poll research (Saad, 2010).

Hispanics, on the other hand, favor reform that provides a path to citizenship. In the same LatinoMetrics poll, 76 percent of Latinos supported legislation that included a path to citizenship. Conversely, 74 percent of those polled strongly disagreed with Arizona SB 1070 because they believed it would be used by law enforcement to promote racial profiling and human rights infringements. Polling suggests that for Hispanics, immigration reform is

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<sup>8</sup> “Latino” is a term used by the research group. This term is synonymous with the term “Hispanic” used in this project.

<sup>9</sup> Respondents were asked, “How important is it to you that the government takes steps this year to deal with each of the following—extremely important, very important, moderately important, or not that important?”

about basic human rights, while for the general or non-Hispanic population it is an issue of citizenship and access to public services. From both perspectives immigration reform is gaining traction.

### 1.3 Problem

The differences in public opinion about immigration reform are evident when separate populations are polled about the issue. In short, there is considerable disagreement about what should be done about illegal immigration. For many Americans the term "immigration reform" suggests that the government should move to reduce immigration. Yet among Hispanics reform is seen as an avenue to legitimacy and citizenship. According to the representatives from NALEO and NCLR, their Hispanic membership sees immigration reform in a positive light. The community believes there is a need to regulate entrance into the country and protect the population from any criminal element seeking enterprise in the United States.

However, reform cannot be supported by the community if it does not provide an economically and socially feasible path to permanent citizenship. "It's not like it was in the early centuries when immigrants came to Ellis Island and were sworn in and allowed to pass. Citizenship costs, in both time and money, and it's more than the current immigrant population can afford" (Representative of HCAFL-CIO, 2010).

Arizona SB 1070 offers an excellent example of what Hispanic groups feel is unjust legislation. "The law, which proponents and critics alike said was the broadest and strictest immigration measure in generations, would make the failure to carry immigration documents a crime and give the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally" (Archibald, 2010). However, opponents of the legislation see the legislation as an affront against immigrants' basic human rights and believe the law is unconstitutional.

Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed the bill into law at the encouragement of a segment of her constituency. The legislation provided a possible solution to a general immigration problem for politically motivated elected officials and public figures seeking to gain the support of a conservative voting bloc. Conversely, the passage of the legislation alienated the Hispanic community and fostered concerns about racial profiling and the restriction of basic civil rights (Archibald, 2010; Hagmann, 2010; Rangel, 2010; Sigal, 2010).

The reaction to Arizona SB 1070 was a massive political activist movement among the Hispanic community. According to those interviewed for this project, the Hispanic community is not devoid of political ambition, yet research suggests that the community's level of activism fluctuates depending on the issue. On the surface the passing into law of SB 1070 was a "lightning

rod" for Hispanic political activism, as groups across the nation held demonstrations and joined Hispanic groups in Arizona and achieved an injunction to suspend the carrying out of the legislation.

#### 1.4 Research Question

While Arizona SB 1070 has been halted by injunction, largely due to political activism, copycat legislation has been proposed in Nevada, Maryland, and Texas, among a number of other states (NALEO representative, 2011).<sup>10</sup> This study will focus on activism in Texas regarding pending legislation similar to SB 1070.

Included in the separate bills are requirements for identification, grounds for immigration checks when detaining individuals, and voter requirement laws. All were hot-button issues for Hispanic advocacy groups in Arizona and may be so in Texas.

Efforts to study the reaction of Hispanic organizations to immigration reform are starting to increase, but the current literature is limited. This research addresses three major questions concerning how Hispanic organizations have reacted to pending immigration legislation in the state of Texas. First, have Hispanic civil rights groups reacted to the pending

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<sup>10</sup> "Copycat legislation" is a term that was used throughout the interviews for this project. In this case, the interviewees used this term to describe upcoming or existing legislation that has many of the same elements as Arizona SB 1070.

immigration reform bills in Texas? Second, if they have reacted, do these advocacy groups use pending immigration reform bills to mobilize the Hispanic community to influence the policy process? Third, if advocacy groups are concerned with immigration reform, what types of action plans do they create? To address these questions I conduct interviews with leaders of ten national and local Hispanic advocacy groups about pending immigration legislation in Texas.

## 2. The Role of Advocacy Groups in the Policy Process

Much has been written about the role of advocacy groups in the policy process (see Birkland, 2011; Burnstein, 1991; Burnstein & Linton, 2002; deLeon, 1995; Pralle, 2003). This study expands upon the role of advocacy groups in the policy process by examining Hispanic civil rights organizations and immigration reform in Texas. The first step in examining how Hispanic civil rights view and influence immigration policy is to better understand the role advocacy organizations can play in the policy process.

This chapter is organized to cover the major themes surrounding the role of advocacy organization in the policy-making process. First, I present the basic reasons why individuals join advocacy groups, in order to understand the decision-making process that contributes to how these groups are formed. Next, I examine advocacy organizations' responsibility in the policy process, focusing on their role as an intermediary between the public and the policy-makers. Third, I present six common types of advocacy groups

to understand how these groups organize and operate. Fourth, and most importantly, I outline how the literature suggests that these groups attempt to influence the policy process. Fifth, I present the ways in which these groups participate in the policy process and the possible results of those actions. And sixth, I outline some of the possible tactics these groups can use to effect change and exert their influence.

This literature provides the basis for the major questions asked in this thesis, guides the exploration of how groups determine what issues they act upon, and shows how these groups can take steps to address their community's concerns.

## 2.1 Why individuals join advocacy organizations

Individuals represent one actor in the policy process (Birkland, 2011). According to Birkland, individuals are the target of both policy-makers and advocacy groups, and the number of actors in the policy process creates a logjam or cluster of opinions. If the opinions of individuals were addressed one at a time, this would confuse or hinder the process further. The remedy for this is the creation of localized groups to advocate and deliver a centralized opinion, such as the advocacy organizations involved in this study.

The number of actors in the policy-making process is often seen as a detriment because a large number of actors influence many different interests that will need to be addressed in order to form policy. This is where advocacy, or interest, groups come into the process. “Interest groups are important—perhaps central—to the policy process because the power of individuals is greatly magnified when they form groups” (Birkland, 2011). Concentrating their individual power into one group provides an avenue for individuals to be heard, which addresses a concern that prevents many people from participating in the policy process.

At the basic level, the main reason people join interest groups is to increase the power of their political voice. Thus, interest groups are attractive because individuals can share their ideas with those who have similar ideological viewpoints. While the allure of an improved concentrated stake in the policy process is important, it is not the only reason, or even the primary reason, that individuals join advocacy groups. Rather, they join such groups because the groups address issues that affect them personally, building a personal connection between the person and the group (Marsh, 1971).

While the personal connection is essential to an individual’s joining a group, it is important to examine how the connection is forged. Long ago, Truman (1951) presented disturbance theory to explain why people engage with interest groups. This theory suggests that individuals decide to

participate in group activity when a disturbance alters the status quo. Once this happens, individuals are apt to join groups of like-minded people or those facing similar issues in order to act against the disturbance and restore their personal equilibria. This is an appealing and easily accepted theory because it is grounded in a logical formula. "Its essential reasoning is quite logical: there is a cause and effect relationship between external forces (disturbances) and the formation of new interest group organizations" (Berry, 1978, p. 382). The results of this thesis provide evidence that disturbance theory is what is at work in regard to immigration reform. Most notably, a number of these groups are seeing a rise in membership and resources based on individuals' interest in immigration reform.

Another theoretical basis for joining advocacy groups is exchange theory (Salisbury, 1969). Salisbury suggests that individuals join groups because they receive a benefit for doing so, and this drives individuals to become more civically engaged. Exchange theory is similar to disturbance theory in that it suggests a cause-and-effect relationship, but it is not expressly reliant on a signaling or focusing event.

Both theories suggest that to become involved, individuals must realize what is important to them. Building on these theories, Doan and Wood (2003) propose that problem definition can be measured using a threshold model to determine when individuals will actually take action. This theory

conceptualizes how the public identifies issues and starts to push for new policy. Doan and Wood's theory is based on the rational choice perspective that issues exist on a spacial plane that has a tipping point, namely the balance between cost and benefit. When the cost outweighs the benefit for an individual, the threshold is crossed and the individual starts to mobilize. Once this happens to a group of individuals, momentum is created in the community and issues are brought to the attention of decision-makers regarding the balance between the public's need and the lack of current policy.

Salisbury (1969) and Truman (1951) suggest that individuals take action in groups only when they are prodded to by outside influences. Another view on participation in groups is that individuals feel the groups serve a civic or altruistic purpose (Moe, 1980). While materialistic and reward-based models provide an obvious reason for advocacy group identification, there is a segment of the population who joins advocacy groups for a simple reason: to do their civic duty, which includes influencing public policy. The desired result of the activity is a collective benefit and not an individual one (Forsythe & Welch, 1983; Moe, 1980).

These three theories provide three solid, rational bases for individuals' joining advocacy groups. While they differ in their ideology, all have proven to be correct in some cases. Therefore, my intention is not to debate which is

correct, but to provide three possible explanations as to why individuals join advocacy groups and take part in the policy process. This literature underlies one of the main questions posed in this thesis: is immigration reform a strong-enough event to push Hispanics to get and stay involved with advocacy groups fighting against immigration reform? In the results section of this thesis, a main observation is that the current battle over reform has spurred additional advocacy among the Hispanic community at the local and national levels.

In answering this question we are potentially provided with another reason why individuals join groups. For example, it may be that impending legislation in Texas—or in other states such as Arizona, Massachusetts, and Nevada—serves to support the disturbance perspective, that is, immigration legislation threatens the status quo of Hispanics in Texas and elsewhere in the country. If immigration reform does serve as a disturbance to the Hispanic community in Texas, then we should find evidence for this in interviews with group leaders. This research may provide support for the idea that individuals are likely to join groups as a result of the impact a policy issue can have on their lives or the lives of those close to them. Where that disturbance originates (Texas or other states) is in question. In short, if Hispanic advocacy and civil rights groups have responded to legislation in Texas, then

disturbance theory may help explain that response by providing an explanation for it.

Most significantly, the ability of immigration reform to stimulate Hispanic activism provides evidence of a way for advocacy groups to reach a rapidly growing population, which many in political science and politics have been seeking to learn how to do for a number of years (Marquez, 2000).

## 2.2 Advocacy groups' responsibilities in the policy process

There is a place in policy science/democracy dynamic for public input (deLeon, 1995). An informed public can make a valuable contribution to effective policy if these members, or their groups, are given the opportunity to take part in the policy process. Providing the public with information and opportunity can increase civic engagement, especially in a decentralized government. Yet ensuring these groups have a coherent and understandable voice is an issue that needs to be addressed. One potential solution is the inclusion and identification of advocacy groups.

Policy-makers work with the community, often via community groups or public advocates, to determine the facts and aspects of issues that establish the criteria for future policy (deLeon, 1995). Questions that policy-makers might ask of community representatives deal with who will be affected by a proposed policy, and to what extent. This collaboration helps to determine

what is possible, which often is not the optimal or perfect solution, and is vital to the success of the policy process.

While public advocates take part in all aspects of policy-making, they can be especially useful in identifying environmental parameters and time constraints. They work within the community to educate and mobilize efforts to identify issues and put them into a policy context. These advocates, most notably advocacy groups and community leaders, work for specific causes and usually on behalf of specific population groups. Especially at the local level, they serve as a bridge between public opinion and policy (Andrews & Edwards, 2004). In many cases, these groups are more knowledgeable about the needs of the community than any other participant in the policy innovation process.

The value of public advocates lies in their ability to speak in a unified voice to analysts and decision-makers on behalf of their constituency. Putting the issue into context is vital to the success of the public's having an influence on policy. If decision-makers receive thousands of letters, this demonstrates interest in a problem but does not provide a concise view of how the community would like to see the issue resolved. In mobilizing together, often under the umbrella of an advocacy organization, the public can address decision-makers with one clear voice and vision.

The fact that these advocates act in congruence with the public interest gives them increased value, as opposed to a corporation, Lobbyist, or special interest group, who are not dedicated to addressing public, needs (Herrington, 2005). Without input from the public, having a realistic idea of the urgency of needed activity would be difficult. Working with these groups helps decision-makers and policy analysts define the scope of a given problem throughout the policy process.

### 2.3 Types of advocacy groups

There are a number of ways to classify advocacy groups. Groups can be studied as national or local, public interest or special interest, or institutional or membership-based. In this section I will examine the differences between these types of groups and what each can offer to the policy process.

#### 2.3.1 Institutional versus membership organizations

The first distinction to examine is that between institutional and membership-based groups. Institutional groups are formed through association gained by belonging to a specific entity (Birkland, 2011). An example involved in this thesis is the Harris County AFL-CIO, which is included in the category of Hispanic advocacy groups because it is interested

in advancing the rights of Hispanics who participate in the labor union. This group is active in protesting immigration reform in Texas, but the majority of its membership is not Hispanic, and therefore are supporting a cause as members of the group and not to meet their individual interests.

Membership groups, on the other hand, are created by choice and often out of a desire to join together with like-minded individuals (Birkland, 2011). These types of groups are often categorized similarly to the civil rights groups I examine in this study. Groups of Hispanic advocates seek a coalition within the group model to address issues that pertain to them individually and others in the group.

Most of the Hispanic advocacy groups examined in this study fall into the category of membership groups. These groups are made up of different individuals who are drawn together simply by their affiliation with the institution. In this case, the groups studied are all membership-based organizations that were created by community leaders and advocates to champion a specific cause. Their membership is composed of individuals who have a connection with that cause, which is prompting them to make a conscious choice to get involved to work toward an acceptable solution. The exception is the Harris County AFL-CIO, a group that advocates for Hispanic rights but which is not focused solely on that segment of the community.

### 2.3.2 Public interest versus economic interest groups

Another difference to examine is that between public and economic interest groups. Public interest groups are formed to provide political and policy guidance to effect change and to work toward the greater good (Birkland, 2011; Cigler & Nownes, 1995; Rothenberg, 1989). Public interest groups work toward the “common cause,” suggesting that these groups are formed in line with Moe’s (1980) concept that civic duty or altruistic views and desires are the primary motivations for group participation. The downside to public interest groups according to Birkland (2011) is that they often cannot show a tangible gain to sustain membership, which means these groups have a hard time growing in both power and size.<sup>11</sup> Groups involved in this study, however, have shown such gains regarding immigration reform, which has allowed them to sustain their memberships.

Economic interest groups fall in line with disturbance theory (Truman, 1951) or exchange theory (Salisbury, 1969). Groups are formed and joined by people seeking change or wanting to sustain a status quo that provides an individual benefit. Special-interest groups are in this category. These groups work toward the benefit of a selected portion of the public, and the benefits yielded likely accrue to those who have substantial resources (Birkland, 2011;

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<sup>11</sup> A tangible gain is an example of a group’s success that the group can present to current or potential members, or evidence that it is able to convey members’ opinions in a bottom-up process that makes the individuals’ opinions count.

Blais & McCallum, 1987; Schmitz, 1988). Often their work involves specific events or “causes” that infringe on the particular group interest of those they represent.

With the literature presented, discerning where the civil rights groups involved in this study and such groups in general, fall on this continuum is a difficult task. Although none of the groups involved in this study is focused solely on immigration reform, their intention is to cause change that can directly affect their community. While free-riders do exist in this case, in that fair immigration reform would benefit all races who immigrate, there is evidence that the community that stands to gain the most from the action of the organizations involved is the community these groups represent.

The exception, as in the last section, is the Harris County AFL-CIO, a labor-based organization serving the labor rights of its membership. While some aspects of these groups would align with those of special-interest groups, for instance in some of the lobbying tactics used, I believe the groups surveyed in this project are public-interest groups, as they are working toward a general policy solution that will provide benefits to the public within and outside their target community.

### 2.3.3 Large versus small organizations

The final distinction I will examine is that between large and small groups. Large groups are classified as peak organizations (Birkland, 2011), which are considered the most influential and connected groups. The effect of these large organizations is an increased stature in the policy process. “Money, knowledge, and information are related to the size of the group and the resources that it and its members can bring to policy conflicts” (Birkland, 2011, p. 135). These resources are what make groups powerful and increase their political power. The most important resource is knowledge (Howlett & Ramesh, 1995), which is often reserved for those with access to decision-makers and subject matter experts. Typically larger or peak organizations have such access.

In contrast, small groups, a classification that applies to seven of the groups surveyed in this thesis, normally have difficulty providing these types of incentives for membership and have trouble building their stature in the policy process (Birkland, 2011). Power often lies in increased numbers; however, there are cases in which resources such as increased money and knowledge can outweigh membership size. As mentioned above, knowledge is an important indicator of the influence or power of an organization. But money places a close second. Therefore, it is possible for there to be a small group composed of wealthy and influential subject matter experts. These are

often special interest groups that have a specific set of goals and a small number of individuals being served by the work.

However, most often this is not the case. Smaller public interest groups struggle to gain an audience and to accrue the power necessary to effect change or have some influence on their own. This is where coalitions come into the equation. Smaller groups are often drawn to other groups that have increased stature, in order to improve both groups' place in the policy process (Brams, Jones & Kilgour, 2005). These coalitions offer a way for smaller groups to become more influential and often lead to the development of peak organizations or social movements.

We see examples of this in the results section of this study. The larger groups involved in this study are national groups. Those groups and the larger state groups are confident that their political resources and current stature in Texas politics will provide the advantage in gaining an audience with Texas legislators. The smaller groups in this study understand that their levels of resources are not high and are looking to those groups with larger memberships and greater resources to provide information and power through coalition. The results show that these groups understand the concepts discussed in the previous section and are working either to take advantage of the larger groups' resources or to build coalitions to gain access to those resources. Also of interest is the fact that these groups are working

together, as the threat of unfair immigration reform is fostering a willing partnership between the levels.

These are just three contrasting organization types. Groups fall into a number of categories simultaneously. A group can be public interest and be either institutional or membership-based. The common thread is that these groups are developed and individuals join them to enact some type of overall public change or benefit (Birkland, 2011). While the resources and motives differ, advocacy, in its basic form, is developed out of a desire to improve the public welfare.

## 2.4 Power development

Organizational power is derived from the organization's ability to apply pressure through membership or resources to cause change in the early parts of the policy process. Understanding the power an organization has is vital to examining how the Hispanic groups involved in immigration reform may respond to immigration legislation.

Defining power in the policy process can be difficult. One way to understand it is to recognize that power is derived from the resources an organization can use to persuade or educate (Birkland, 2011). However, Arts and Tatenhove (2004) assert that power is generated not only from resources, but from success or outcomes. In addition to tangible resources

such as money, resources in persuasion and argument to sway points of view and affect public discourse should be considered when determining a group's power.

Power is the organizational and discursive capacity of agencies, either in competition with one another or jointly to achieve outcomes in social practices, a capacity which is however co-determined by the structural power of those social institutions in which these agencies are embedded. (Arts & Tatenhove, 2004, p. 347)

The best opportunity for advocacy groups to wield their power is in the policy innovation stage (Birkland, 2011). This is when these groups can use their resources to attempt to force decision-makers to make or not make certain policy decisions. In Texas, this is the stage that immigration reform is currently in. Policy-makers are deciding which bills to review, introduce, and pass on to the Governor for signing. This is the stage in the policy-making process in which advocacy groups, as policy actors, can attempt to use their power to arrange policy in a way that aligns with their organizational views.

With immigration reform yet to be discussed in the state legislature, immigration reform bills are still being developed. While these reforms are not yet laws, nor have they been discussed at the time of this thesis, Hispanic advocacy groups are working to address both the policy innovation stage and the agenda-setting stage. The results of this thesis suggest that, before the

Texas legislature meets to act on the proposed reform, groups are mobilizing in response to the proposed legislation while simultaneously trying to address the policy agenda by pushing their views of what fair immigration reform includes. This is discussed more in the next section.

When discussing issue identification and how it transfers to the policy process it's important to examine the types of power that exist (Bachrach & Morton, 1962). The elitist power model suggests that those with ample resources and influence have the most influence and reason for participating in the policy process. This falls in line with the theory that groups that have the most resources have the most influence on policy-makers and the process in general.

However, a pluralist view suggests that power is derived from activity, which means that membership-driven groups are more influential in the policy process. Examining this debate in the context of the immigration debate in Texas, it seems that the answer falls somewhere in the middle. There is evidence that resources provide groups—sometimes called special interest groups—the most influence. However, there is strength in numbers, and policy-makers are known to respond to the power of both types of groups (Birkland, 2011).

Manzer (1984) suggests that the pluralist and elitist planning models are useful in partial consumption and are most effective when combined.

Unfortunately neither of the two types of models that dominate current studies of public policy has an adequate concept of substantive rationality. Pluralist-exchange models are constructed on the assumption that the only good reasons, those given weight or worth consideration by decision-makers, are self-regarding ones. Elitist-planning models are constructed on the assumption that the only good reasons backing policy decisions are other-regarding. Essentially each type of model has assumed away the issue of substantive rationality by adopting a one-sided view of practical reasoning. (Manzer, 1984, p. 593)

His study provides two model types with which to view policy-making as a practical response to an issue facing the community. Both model types would be based mainly on incorporating substantive rationality into the decision-making process. The first involves a sequence of decision-making that accepts that actors assign different values and weights to events that influence their decision. The second involves institutions and problem-solving classified by their modes of reasoning. These types expand on the pluralist and elitist views by introducing rational decision-making activity.

One view of how advocacy groups can use their power is Bachrach and Baratz (1962), who suggest that power is derived from two faces: the ability to influence decision-making and the ability to influence non-decision-making. Under this concept, groups can wield power by influencing decision-makers in the policy process to make and not make certain decisions. This

concept is very important because it takes the idea of power from a one-dimensional view to a two-dimensional view. It shows that power can be utilized in various ways, meaning that organizations can be effective in various ways.

The result of this gain in power is that groups have the ability to address and influence the policy process. This is a central concept to this thesis: that the groups examined have the ability and political power, either singly or in coalition form, to push their issues up the agenda and alter what they feel is unfair immigration reform. The underlying question is whether, in an attempt to gain power, these groups are better off building coalitions to increase power, and whether these coalitions, combined with the efforts in other states, will create a social movement. In the results section of this thesis it is suggested that groups, as mentioned in the previous section, understand that power is important, and that immigration is unifying the efforts of those with and without power to gain an audience with legislators.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The question that comes to mind with these results is whether this is limited to issues that are considered focusing events or rallying points. Power and resources are considered to be a coveted commodity among advocacy groups and not something these groups would give up. This is an aspect of the literature I was not able to explore in this thesis but it bears examination in future research on Hispanic advocacy activity.

## 2.5 Ways groups can participate

Now that we understand how these groups gain their powers, the next step is to examine in what part(s) of the policy process they can use these powers to mobilize the Hispanic community. While there are a number of avenues through which organizations can participate, for this thesis I will concentrate on the organizations' ability to effect policy change and set the policy agenda.

First I will discuss agenda setting. "Agenda setting is the process by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public and elite attention" (Birkland, 2011, p. 169). Organizations are in a constant struggle to influence the current place of their important issues on the policy agenda and promote their viewpoint on those issues. The ultimate goal is to use their power to move their viewpoints on issues and concerns to the top of the current policy agenda, which is called enactment (Birkland, 2011). This happens in the first stages of the policy process, when the parameters of that policy are being developed and nurtured. This offers these organizations the opportunity to promote their ideas and provides the biggest window for creating significant policy change.

The second aspect of agenda setting is to keep the relevance of the issue or particular platform current or fresh in the minds of the other actors involved in the policy process. In the next section I will examine some of the

tactics that organizations use to accomplish this, but at this point it is important to understand that groups must stay active to preserve their power and their issue's place on the policy agenda. Maintaining an issue's importance in the public eye provides a tangible result that groups can use to promote their organization, something that, as mentioned above, is a major concern for public interest groups.

From the policy-maker's point of view, organizations are given a role in agenda setting for a number of reasons, the most salient of which is as subject matter experts (Burnstein, 1991; Burnstein & Linton, 2002). Organizations are seen as vehicles to help policy-makers understand issues. While the organization is seeking an audience with the policy-maker, the policy-maker is sometimes looking for the organization to provide guidance. Burnstein (1991) suggests this happens in cases where organizations have the power in the policy process to serve in this role. Overall, organizations are seen in this initial policy stage as advocates and suppliers of information on the subject, offering insight into the feelings of that group's community.

After the initial stage, organizations play a significant role in causing policy change. Often this takes place when policy-makers' goals cause them to overlook the role and expertise of advocacy groups and create policy outside their organizational objectives. This is the case in Texas, along with other states such as Arizona, regarding immigration reform. Organizations are

both reactive and proactive in this stage of the process. Groups are looking to change the status quo or current legislation while also looking to advance their organizational views for future agendas and policy-making.

Burnstein and Linton (2002) suggest that organizations have the greatest impact during the agenda-setting stage. Their study argues that once issues transfer from the agenda to actual policy, the role of political or advocacy organizations diminishes. If we accept this, we see that creating policy change can be a daunting task. The researchers suggest that at this stage a larger show of force and resources is required to provoke policy-makers into changing course.

Birkland (2011) suggests that the most effective way to enact policy change is to take advantage of political opportunities. These occur when new officials are elected and when policy is up for a general debate. Another opportunity to effect policy change is to sway public opinion. There is evidence of a congruency between Congressional and public ideals, especially on the major issues, so the framework for a working partnership exists. Bridging the gap between the groups to create effective policy options is the main issue (Baumgartner & Jones, 2004). It is important to acknowledge the role that advocacy organizations play as facilitators in this part of the policy process (Andrews & Edwards, 2004).

There are a number of ways for advocacy organizations to participate in the policy process, but I have chosen to focus on agenda setting and policy change because they are the stages of the process most relevant to this thesis. Groups also have the ability to sway opinion in different stages of the policy process, most notably to induce the termination of the policy (deLeon, 1983), to name one example. Yet I believe that agenda setting and policy change are the stages of the process these groups are involved in currently, with regard to their fight against what they believe to be unfair immigration reform coming up for debate in Texas.

## 2.6 Potential advocacy group tactics

The final section of this chapter will concentrate on the third research question, which addresses the types of participation and tactics that may constitute these groups' potential action plans for addressing immigration reform. Now that we have examined how organizations are formed, how they develop power, and the stages of the policy process they are most involved in, it is prudent to examine the tactics these groups can use to make their mark. By "tactics" I am referencing the avenues and methods these groups can employ to actually move issues up and down the agenda and effect policy change. For this thesis, I chose to concentrate on four specific maneuvers: lobbying, mobilization, use of the media, and venue shopping.

Lobbying is a term and activity that is often associated with special interest or economic groups, but all groups utilize the tactic. "Lobbying is the organized, continuous act of communicating with the government" (Birkland, 2011, p. 139). Birkland makes the case that lobbying has a negative connotation because the public associates it with "shady backroom dealings" or drives to increase campaign finance or pork-barreling (Campos & Giovannoni, 2007). Under the above definition lobbying takes place every day as a tool of groups or coalitions seeking an audience with policy-makers to plead their case, promote issues, or air grievances. Lobbying is one of the most useful tactics because lobbyists can provide useful information from a variety of groups and sources, including the public (Brint, 1990; Potters & van Winden, 1992). And while not all groups have the clout, power, or resources to hire or gain access as lobbyists, it is a tool that these groups and coalitions covet.

While lobbying is a tactic all organizations with sufficient resources can use, mobilization or mass mobilization is one that is integral to advocacy group success. However, groups do not simply choose to mobilize their resources for their cause (McCarthy & Wolfson, 1996). Mobilization takes place when a catalyst or focusing event—a sudden event that draws interest—occurs that groups can rally around (Birkland, 1998). When this occurs, groups, or numbers of groups, take the opportunity to work together

to push a unified agenda to policy-makers. A recent and pertinent example is the recent reaction to Arizona SB 1070, in which groups from across the nation were called to arms to fight legislation similar to the upcoming bills in Texas. The focusing event occurred when Governor Brewer signed the bill into law, providing a rallying cry for groups both national and local or large and small. The reaction was a mass mobilization that took place nationwide.

The result of successful mobilization can be the creation of a social movement. While the social movement literature is expansive, for the purpose of this discussion I am focusing on the development of social movements and their impact on the policy process. Social movements occur when those with less power or influence over the policy process unite and mass-mobilize to carry on a burgeoning fight (Birkland, 2011). A popular and primary example of a social movement is the movement for civil rights in the 1960s and 1970s. Movements against unjust and unfair policies were initiated in various pockets of the nation. As voices of dissent were ignored or silenced, the groups moved to create a coalition to pool their resource and political strength. Often, building these social movements involves creating coalitions not only with groups concerned with the major issue but also with those who could receive benefits in the fight for their related issues. Therefore, social movements are the graduated result of mass mobilization. The fight against immigration

reform is picking up steam in the United States, and with its profile growing it is possible that it could grow into a large-scale movement.

Another of the tactics groups can use is to employ media and personal relationships with elected officials to facilitate an audience with policy-makers. An example is Greenpeace's use of the media to initiate a campaign against Shell Oil in the United Kingdom over ocean pollution. Greenpeace employed a series of media (print, video, and internet) to put pressure on the government to promote policy change regarding the environment. The government received so much pressure from the public based on Greenpeace's media campaign that it was forced to revisit its environmental policy, and these efforts ultimately led to policy change (Bahkir, 2006). This is evidence of two things: (1) the immense influence an advocacy group and the media can have on public opinion, and (2) the level of attention that public officials will pay to a mobilized public.

For this thesis the final tactic I will examine is venue shopping, which occurs when policy-makers or actors, including advocacy groups, seek to change the framework or environment in which decisions are made regarding policy (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Pralle, 2003). "Policy venues are institutional sites where the portrayal of problems and solutions take place" (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993, p. 32). These actors can be frustrated by

potential bias and the current landscape of a venue in which decisions are being made (Goodwin & Schrodel, 2000; Burnett & Davis, 2002).

For advocacy groups, venue shopping offers an avenue for the group to establish a venue that will serve their organizational needs and their understanding of policy (Pralle, 2003). Pralle identifies three potential drawbacks for advocacy groups: (1) groups are likely acting with complete knowledge of an issue, (2) the existence of internal and organizational constraints, and (3) the belief that the root cause of an issue will lead to the policy venue, which could be incorrect.

As with other subjects addressed in this chapter, the literature and types of tactics are extremely extensive. For the purpose of this thesis I chose to concentrate on the tactics that relate to the upcoming battle against pending immigration reform in Texas. To select them I used the recent happenings in Arizona as a barometer to obtain a better understanding of the type of actions that similar groups in Texas could take, which I believe is shown in the results and discussion sections of this thesis.

## 2.7 Relevance of the literature

An examination of the role of advocacy groups and how they can take part in the policy process is an important part of this thesis. To understand the upcoming battle and views of the advocacy organizations interviewed we must understand the accepted theories and concepts under which these groups are attempting to operate.

Concepts presented in this chapter suggest that for advocacy groups in Texas to be successful they will have to ensure that their power and resources are adequate to gain an audience with the influential policy-makers. With immigration reform still in the concept stages in Texas, the groups are focusing on pushing their platform up the agenda of public opinion and government officials.

Given the strong presence of Hispanic advocacy groups in Texas it is reasonable to assume that these groups are an established and influential entity. The battle they are fighting is to convince policy-makers that reform similar to that in Arizona would not be a positive step in the heavily Hispanic state. The focusing event is a combination of the activity that took place in Arizona and the inclusion of a growing number of potential immigration reform bills on the docket for the next state legislature.

The questions asked in this thesis examine whether these groups and the Hispanic community are being mobilized by immigration reform. If they

are in fact being mobilized, which the results of this thesis suggest has happened, the resulting questions involve how advocacy organizations can use immigration reform to mobilize otherwise inactive members of the Hispanic communities that are represented by the organizations involved in this study, and the types of action plans they are working toward to address immigration reform in the agenda-setting and policy innovation stage of the policy process. This literature supports the contention that there are opportunities for Hispanic advocacy groups to take these steps and provides basic concepts that assist in understanding and the motivation of those steps.

While the literature supports the research questions, the results of this thesis provide further confirmation that many of the concepts outlined in this chapter apply to the Hispanic advocacy community. One significant concept that is supported is that Hispanics are compelled to act because of a focusing event, which falls in line with disturbance theory (Truman, 1951) and exchange theory (Salisbury, 1969). In the results section of the study it is reported that the groups are not only seeing an increase in membership due to immigration reform but are using immigration reform to rally support. Further proof is that these groups are not confident that they will be able to sustain the level of support once the immigration issue is resolved. The implication is that without a focusing event participation in these groups and on this issue would wane.

Also, the results of this thesis support the idea that resources and power are valuable commodities and also raise a question about the willingness of these groups to share their power and resources with groups of both greater and lesser means. We see from the results that these groups are advocating coalitions and working toward action plans that share power and resources in an effort to make significant change. What this suggests is that while groups must be ambitious to gain power and improve resources, these groups are issue-conscious in the sense that they realize that there are some policies that require a sharing of these valued commodities.

Lastly, this thesis contributes the concept that groups are able to use issues to gain power, resources, and membership. The literature offers insight into why individuals become involved and into aspects of the groups' intentions and use of resources. What I believe is added in this thesis is the idea that these groups are able and willing to use issues to build their profiles, which is something that is useful to understand when examining the activities and intentions of these groups.

### 3. History of Hispanic Civil Rights

Examining Hispanic advocacy in the context of immigration reform in this case benefits from a brief examination of the history of Hispanic civil rights. Under many names, immigrant groups from Central America and Mexico have fought a number of fights for basic rights in the United States.<sup>13</sup> Immigration reform is a clear part of that history, as evidenced in the first chapter, as are battles over education, labor rights, and political representation, along with issues that reach across races, such as the all-encompassing civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the anti-war movement, and major contemporary movements concerning environmental issues and economic reform.

Looking back over the history of Hispanic civil rights I will focus on three basic issue areas: education, labor laws, and political representation. I believe that looking at the early stages and evolution of the Hispanic civil

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<sup>13</sup> Chicano, Latino and Hispanic are monikers that have been associated with social movements.

rights movement will provide a framework for examining the current state of immigration reform, which will occupy the last section of this section.

Understanding where these civil rights movements originated and how the role of Hispanic advocacy groups and the movements that helped generate them evolved provides a better understanding of the role these groups can play.

### 3.1 How social movements develop

Social movements compose a large section of United States history. Some high-profile movements in the United States include the movements to improve women's rights (Minkoff & Paltrow, 2004), labor rights (Derks, 2000; Cranford & Wilton, 2002; Schiavone, 2008), and the environment (Parker-Gwin, 2000 & Walter, 2007). Before I discuss the major points of Hispanic civil rights movement history it is important understand how social movements develop.

When groups of people mobilize and coalesce around a set of high visibility issues; a social movement may result. A social movement involves far more people—although not all at a high degree of activity—than the membership of relevant interest groups. Social movements often involve a coalition of groups with similar goals; and other people that support groups without affiliation. (Birkland, 2011, p. 134)

Hispanics have been a part of several important social movements. The most visible was the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Hispanic groups rallied alongside African-American and other civil rights activists to force change in the laws that governed minorities.

Public advocates work within the community to educate and mobilize efforts to identify issues and put them into policy contexts. These public advocates, most notably advocacy groups and community leaders,<sup>14</sup> work for specific causes and usually on behalf of specific population groups. Especially at the local level, these advocates are a bridge between public opinion and policy (Andrews & Edwards, 2004). In many cases, leaders and subject matter experts employed by these advocacy groups are more knowledgeable about the needs of the community than any other participant in the initiation process and their decisions about how and when to mobilize are critically important.<sup>15</sup>

For elected officials, understanding this reality means the constant search for equilibrium points on policy to stabilize policy monopolies and to palliate political constituency, giving enough to quell disturbances, but not so much as to generate disruption from the other side. For activists,

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<sup>14</sup> The term "community leaders" in this paper excludes elected officials.

<sup>15</sup> "Employed" does not imply "on the payroll." By "employed" I am referring to either employees or volunteers who have experience and knowledge of the legislative process and the issue-related background to provide information to members of the group and the community.

understanding this interaction means making hard calculations about the costs, as well as the benefits, of concessions on matters of policy and political conclusion. Realizing that the prospects for continued mobilization are limited, in no small part due to the dynamics of coalition politics, should help in considering the trade-offs inherent in cultivating institutionally oriented allies, recognizing better deals, and negotiating them. And for analysts, the recognition of the ongoing interaction between social movements and policy makers means adopting an analytic focus that accepts a long time frame for mutual influence, and an iterative approach to the process of political institutionalization. (Meyer, 2003, p. 14)

Mobilization often takes place in the context of advocacy groups at the grassroots level. Groups of local citizens mobilize against an issue with group activity such as small demonstrations, education and recruitment campaigns, and applying pressure on decision-makers. To do this organizations act within a specific collective action frame. “Collective action frames are narrative maps guiding movements toward their goals. Frames include interpretations of the injustice or immorality of specific social conditions, an attribution of blame for the, some kind of action agenda for solving them, and a motivation for taking that action” (Edwards, 1995, p. 41).

These coalitions and movements can develop from a number of different avenues. Among the considerable social movement theory literature, political opportunity theory is the most applicable to understanding how

advocacy groups become a vital part of the initiation process. Political opportunity theory (Tarrow, 1983) expands on the frameworks provided and constructed by organizations to convey a message that was developed by Esiniger (1973). "As defined by Tarrow (1983, p. 28), the concept has three dimensions: the degree of openness or closure of formal political access, the degree of stability or instability of political alignments, and the availability and strategic posture of potential alliance partners" (Kriesi, 1995, p.167).

Combined with political conflict, these elements deal with the structure of the political system and the power that individual actors and, in our case, groups wield in the political process. Advocacy groups are now one of the actors, according to social movement theorists and the public policy literature above.

Using political opportunity theory we see that organizations have the ability to frame messages and issues to elicit certain reactions from their target audiences. Tarrow (1989) examined this ability in his research on why certain issues are reacted to in different ways across the nation. Looking at ethnic issues that caused violent outbursts in certain regions and not in others, Tarrow found that the opportunity for groups to have a viable and valued voice was a key factor. The research showed that in areas where organizations had a voice the protest or activity was peaceful, and where it was not the opposite happened.

### 3.2 Labor rights: The first Hispanic movement

When reviewing the history of Hispanic civil rights, the first struggle that may come to mind is the fight over employment laws for migrant workers (Mathitessen, 1972; Shaw, 2008; Young, 1969). César Chávez led a successful revolution in that spanned the time between the 1950s and 1970s to overturn numerous labor laws. Chávez operated mainly in California to generate a mass mobilization against the lack of labor oversight by state and federal government agencies. The mobilization was epitomized by the creation of organization such as the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (Young, 1972). The labor movement was instrumental in developing not only Hispanic activism but also the sense that workers have the ability to organize and impact the laws and regulations that govern them (Mathitessen, 1969).

Chávez, who originally intended to be a community activist, was drawn to the fight for economic rights due to his family's background as laborers and knowledge of the system (Shaw, 2008). His rallying not only his fellow workers but also other workers to coordinate their efforts and develop unions and organizations was a standout moment in the history of Hispanic civil rights and labor law advocacy in the United States. "Chávez and the farm workers movement developed ideas, tactics, and strategies that proved so

compelling, so original, and ultimately so successful that they continue to set the course for America's progressive campaigns" (Shaw, 2008, p. 1).

The movement to fight and effect change in the labor system was a vital starting point for Hispanic advocacy. It also has a connection to the current immigration issue. Chávez felt that illegal immigrants and the reluctance of recent immigrants to apply for citizenship or visas to work legally in the United States would hinder the labor movement (Taylor, 1975). Connecting this concept to the immigration movement, there was early awareness that the fight for immigration means and avenues would be important to Hispanic ascendency in the United States. This is one of the findings of this thesis: that Hispanic advocacy groups and their communities are not opposed to immigration reform, but to unfair immigration reform. The consensus of the groups in this study share Chávez's concern that a lack of determination by Hispanics to naturalize will hurt the overall status of Hispanics. But as is evidenced by Chávez's workers rights movement and by the findings of this study, the goal is to create an accessible path to citizenship (Taylor, 1975).

### 3.3 Education reform

The movement to advocate for workers rights was the first major social movement among Hispanics in the United States, and the second was the movement for education rights. Hispanics across the nation organized to effect change in education opportunities for Hispanics (Guajardo, F. & Guajardo, M., 2004; McBrien, 2005; Orfield, 1986; Rodriguez, 2003). However, like the workers movement, the movement started in California and proceeded in Texas.

Guajardo and Guajardo (2004) make a case that the education reform movement epitomized the Hispanic civil rights movement. After *Brown v. the Board of Education* held that all races were entitled to equal and quality education, the movement began for Hispanics to work toward taking advantage of the ruling. While Hispanics often faced unfair practices, including being punished for speaking Spanish at school and being told to drop out or not pursue college educations, the motivation to work toward this reform was not difficult to find. The preferred tactic was to stage walkouts.

These walkouts took place in California and Texas and showed that these groups could organize and work together to effect change (Rodriguez, 2003). In addition to specific tactics, the movement also spurred the organization of groups such as United Mexican American Students (UMAS),

Mexican American Youth Association (MAYA) in California, and the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO).

This movement illustrates a concept that was also raised by the workers' rights movement, namely the necessity of the involvement of young Hispanics (Rodriquez, 2003). As we will see in the next section, young Hispanics have been at the forefront of Hispanic advocacy, due to, among other factors, their ability to break the cultural bonds that the previous generations have had with their home countries (Rodriquez, 2003). Without these bonds, the younger generations see their future in the United States and are more likely to work on current issues (Patterson, 1975). Immigration is one such issue.

### 3.4 Political activism

The umbrella movement that encompasses both of the previous movements is the role and activity of Hispanic groups in basic political activism (Lopez, 1992). For the past fifty years Hispanics have been involved with high-profile issues, the most notable of which were the anti-war movement and voter rights.

The anti-war movement and protests against the Vietnam War proved that, as I argued in the previous section, younger generations took up new fights and used new tactics (Oropeza, 2005). In anti-war protests younger

Hispanics, or Chicanos, debunked the previous generation's ideals of military history. Instead the group chose to fight against the traditional view and chose to voice their displeasure and disenchantment with the government's decision to participate in the Asian conflict. The Chicano Moratorium could be considered the face of the movement as the group worked to bring to light the discrimination against Hispanics in the United States and the military.

Another aspect of Hispanic political activism is Hispanics' work advocating for voting rights and participation. Hispanics of all nationalities have fought to engage their own community as well as outside political actors due to the group's vast potential (Guerra, 1988; Marquez, 1993). With Hispanic participation traditionally low (Marquez, 1993) advocacy groups have rallied in their communities to foster civic engagement and participation. Two of the groups surveyed in this thesis (NCLR and NALEO) have played a large role in this effort.

Groups such as NCLR and NALEO have worked to educate Hispanics about their rights and duties to participate in the political process and by extension the policy process as well. "Political participation depends significantly on political mobilization, that is, on which persons are targeted for political recruitment" (Hero, Garcia, F., Garcia, J. & Pachon, 2000, p. 530). This is a gap that Hispanic groups and advocates have tried to fill since the 1950s. Work continues to this day to organize and invigorate the Hispanic

community to get involved in the political process, but it is an uphill battle, as Hispanics are likely to get involved only in issues that pertain to their lives or community (Patterson, 1975).

### 3.5 Hispanic advocacy groups' impact on immigration reform

Three examples of high-profile issues that have rallied Hispanic support in the past are given in the previous sections of this chapter. This thesis provides evidence that immigration reform could be the next social movement issue facing the Hispanic community, as there are similarities between immigration reform and issues such as education and labor rights.

The movement against immigration reform involves many groups that have taken action. This thesis shows that these groups are willing to work together toward a common cause, which meets Birkland's (2011) definition. These groups are joined by members both within the Hispanic community and outside it, as demonstrated by the inclusion of the HCAF-L-CIO's point of view in this thesis. This, coupled with the mass mobilization that has emerged out of an opportunity to rally support, provides evidence that immigration reform has the makings of the next high-visibility issue to be considered a Hispanic social movement. The transcendence of the issue over time and across state borders provides evidence that this could happen. Also, the ongoing intentions of state legislatures to propose reform suggests that the opportunity

to react to the issue will continue to present itself, a fact that is supported by some of the results in this thesis.

The intention of this thesis is not to characterize immigration reform as a social movement. Immigration issues, however, do emerge in the movement for Hispanic civil rights. As such, many of the organizations that often deal with these movements can be considered civil rights organizations. However, I do think the results of this thesis, combined with circumstances at the state government level and the evolution of the arguments pertaining to immigration reform, provide sufficient evidence that immigration reform should be considered the next high-visibility issue in the Hispanic community. This thesis provides evidence that community and advocacy groups are reacting in a way that would support the assumption: the groups are using immigration reform to recruit members, those groups have taken action in Arizona with regard to SB 1070, and individuals in the Hispanic community have been willing to get involved in an issue that affects their day-to-day lives.

## 4. Methods

### 4.1 Importance of qualitative methods

To conduct this research I chose to employ a qualitative research methodology using semi-structured interviews with executives, key personnel, and other representatives at various Hispanic advocacy groups. I chose this method with the belief that it is the best technique for addressing a question related to current events (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Seidman, 2006).

Group interaction with the community can be quantified, but the reasoning behind the groups' action plans are better understood through a qualitative process (Seidman, 2006).

For this study, I believe that an understanding of the reasoning behind group decisions, especially those made by personnel in the executive or upper organizational levels, is better achieved through an interpersonal question-and-answer section. This approach not only allows for explanation by the respondent, but it also reduces the possibility of a paper- or web-based

survey being “passed off” or answered by a person other than the intended respondent. Survey data is applicable to answering the questions addressed in this thesis but is not guaranteed to elicit the needed data. Therefore, by interviewing key officials in these groups I gathered what I believe is an accurate view of the each organization’s views on immigration reform and how that reform may shape the group’s mobilization of member support.

The semi-structured interview style I chose is characterized as “More or less open-ended questions brought to the interview situation in the form of an interview guide” (Flick, 1998, p. 94). I entered each interview with a set of questions, but follow-up questions were presented as the conversation dictated. This yielded a number of unsolicited responses and key data used in this study, and allowed the respondents and me to create a rapport that was vital in gaining their trust and setting them at ease, which in turn increased their willingness to be candid.

The interview process also allowed the examination of running commentary among the groups. Running commentary refers to phrases, concepts, and issues commonly used and discussed by the respondents—patterns that lend empirical substance to the results and conclusions of this thesis, and which were not anticipated in the planning stages.

## 4.2 Sampling Frame and Organization Description

To obtain my sample I relied on two main sources of information. The first consisted of lists of Hispanic organizations, which I obtained from signed petitions, other research, published white papers regarding Hispanic organizations, and publicly available information materials (both printed and online) regarding Hispanic advocacy. My second source was the member affiliate lists of national organizations, which provide contact information and primary sources for gathering more materials, and which directed me to specific information about the hundreds of Hispanic organizations operating in Texas.

Several problems surfaced during this process. First, a number of organizations were small or did not have readily available information. Second, a number of groups listed had incorrect or faulty contact information, and in some cases I was unable to verify that they were currently in operation. Finally, a large number of organizations list immigration as a focus but do not follow through in practice. Ascertaining the degree to which an organization was actively involved in immigration-related issues was the most difficult part of the process of developing a list of possible organizations to contact.

After conducting this research, I compiled a list of 64 groups. From these, I randomly selected 22 for participation in the study by selecting every third group from the list of 64. Each of these groups fit the necessary criteria

based on the information available. Groups that I chose to contact all have a presence in the state of Texas and are heavily involved in promoting a Hispanic platform regarding federal and state immigration reform, and are thus involved in the policy process.

The criteria are as follows. Each group contacted:

- Lists immigration as a priority either on its website or in communication material.
- Provides services and education to the public regarding immigration reform.
- Takes a public stance regarding immigration.
- Serves the interests of the Hispanic community.
- Has a board of directors.
- Meets generally accepted membership practices and accepts all members regardless of race, religion, education, and sex.”

All 22 organizations contacted have a strong affiliation with immigration reform. Before engaging with these groups I contacted each by email to ascertain not only their willingness to participate, but also their expertise in the area of immigration. In addition, I asked questions in pre-interview conversations, both on the telephone and through email,<sup>16</sup> to ensure that their participation would be applicable to this thesis. I also confirmed that each organization’s online information and literature were accurate, after corresponding with personnel in these organizations (not always the individual I ultimately interviewed) and getting verbal confirmation that the

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<sup>16</sup> No potential interviewee was contacted more than three times before accepting the invitation. Potential respondents were contacted first by email and then by telephone. All pre-interviews were conducted on the telephone after an initial email.

group does in fact actively participate in attempting to promote or address immigration reform.

Representatives from the following organizations agreed to participate in this thesis project.

- Asociacion Salvadorena de los EUA
- National Alliance of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO)
- National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
- League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
- Texas LULAC
- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
- America Para Todos
- Harris County AFL-CIO
- FIEL
- HADAS

Most of these organizations use lobbying efforts and are actively engaged in rallying public support. Each of them holds meetings, with varying regularity, to convey information and raise awareness. The HCAF-L-CIO is a labor organization that is active in lobbying for local and state immigration policy, and works with local groups to assist in connecting them with elected officials. Therefore the group acts as both a coordinating organization and an individual action organization. Membership in the organizations ranges from 21 to 135,000 members; among the issues the groups address in addition to immigration reform are civic participation, education, health care, economics, and naturalization.

Table 4.1 lists the groups that participated in this thesis, indicating where these groups fall within the categories discussed above and providing a snapshot of their makeup.

Table 4.1: Types of organizations studied

Organization	Membership or Institutional	Size (Membership)	Special or Public Interest
<i>Harris County AFL-CIO</i>	Institutional	Large (45,000)	Special
<i>America Para Todos</i>	Membership	Small (131)	Public
<i>Asociacion Salvadorena de los EUA</i>	Membership	Small (21)	Public
<i>FIEL</i>	Membership	Small (47)	Public
<i>HADAS</i>	Membership	Small (80)	Public
<i>Labor Council for Latin American Advancement—Houston, TX</i>	Membership	Small (27)	Public
<i>League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)</i>	Membership	Large (135,000)	Public
<i>Texas LULAC</i>	Membership	Large (978)	Public
<i>National Alliance of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO)</i>	Membership	Large (6,000)	Public
<i>National Council of La Raza (NCLR)</i>	Membership	Large (300 member organizations)	Public

Table 4.2 provides basic information about the groups surveyed in this thesis, including demographic information and the types of issues these groups concentrate on, in order to better illustrate why these groups were chosen for this study.

Table 4.2: Advocacy organization breakdown

Organization	No. of Members*	Issues	Year Started	National, Local, or State
<i>Harris County AFL-CIO</i>	45,000	Labor, Immigration, Economics	1938	Local
<i>America Para Todos</i>	131	Legal, Immigration	2003	Local
<i>Asociacion Salvadorena de los EUA</i>	21	Immigration, Health Care	2008	Local
<i>FIEL</i>	47	Civic Participation, Education, Immigration	2005	Local
<i>HADAS</i>	80	Immigration, Labor, Civic Participation	2007	Local
<i>Labor Council for Latin American Advancement—Houston, TX</i>	27	Labor, Economics, Immigration, Housing, Women's Issues	1972	Local
<i>League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)</i>	135,000	Civil Rights, Economics, Immigration, Health, Education, Technology, Housing	1945	National
<i>Texas LULAC</i>	978	Immigration, Legal, Economics, Civic Rights	1954	State
<i>National Alliance of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO)</i>	6,000	Voting, Immigration, Nationalization, Census	1976	National
<i>National Council of La Raza (NCLR)</i>	300 (member organizations)	Advocacy, Census, Youth Development, Civil Rights, Economy, Education, Health, Immigration	1968	National

\* The number of members was provided by the organization personnel in conversation. If no membership number was given, the figure was retrieved from the organization's website.

#### 4.3 Groups that declined to participate

Twelve of the 22 groups declined to participate, for reasons including a lack of trust in me (one organization),<sup>17</sup> the fact that while immigration is a focus of the organization it is not considered a top priority and the group lacked a subject matter expert (two organizations), and the group's not having a "significant" presence in the state of Texas (one organization).

The remaining eight organizations failed to reply to the three attempts to contact the organization to request its participation, as mandated by the Colorado Multiple Institutional Review Board (COMIRB). All eight of these organizations have websites that show their activity in the community and each answered my telephone calls. However, I was never connected to an appropriate person to participate in the study. Without more specific knowledge of these organizations or the people I was referred to there, I cannot pinpoint the reasons for the lack of response from these organizations.

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<sup>17</sup> The organization replied that it would not accept the interview unless I committed to three months of volunteer work. The requirement is part of its standard operating procedures and suggests that it wants researchers to have full knowledge of the organization, and possibly a sympathetic opinion of it.

#### 4.4 Interviews

Eight interviews with key personnel took place by telephone and two in person, and they ranged from 18 to 47 minutes in length. All interviews were recorded with the subject's permission for transcription and analysis purposes<sup>18</sup>. The interview schedule is included in Appendix C. Each interview featured the following questions:

1. Are you aware of the basic issues of immigration reform?
2. How important do you feel the issue of immigration reform is to the Hispanic community as a whole?
3. Is immigration reform an issue of importance for your organization?
4. Has your organization spoken out officially on the issue of immigration reform?
5. Is your organization for or against immigration reform?
6. Do you feel immigration reform is a divisive issue for the Hispanic community?
7. Do you believe immigration reform will drive more Hispanics to be politically active?
8. Do you think your organization does/can use the attention from immigration reform to recruit more members?
9. Do you think your organization does/can use the attention from immigration reform to generate more interest or raise its public profile?
10. If so, do you believe this is an effective strategy?
11. Do you believe there is controversy surrounding immigration reform?
12. If so, does the controversy surrounding immigration reform serve as a positive for organizations to improve membership, recruiting, and/or funding?

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<sup>18</sup> The process used to contact subjects, conduct the interviews, and analyze these data was approved by the human subjects committee at the University of Colorado Denver.

13. Are there any other issues in addition to immigration reform that can provide a boost to Hispanic political advocacy?
14. Are there any other comments you would like to add about your group's activity or the effects of immigration reform?<sup>19</sup>

Interview transcripts and recordings were analyzed by me to identify themes pertaining to the research questions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).<sup>20</sup>

No one declined to have their personal or organizational identity included in the results of this project, but I chose not to include these identities for privacy purposes. These transcripts and recordings include verbal confirmation of the interviewee's willingness to participate in the study and his or her permission to be recorded.

To code the interview data I used a system of theoretical concepts to identify relevant themes and repeating ideas (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). To do this I transcribed the interviews and searched for statements and ideas that addressed the research questions in this thesis. After highlighting the text I discovered a series of running patterns or commentary among the interviews. A number of themes emerged, which are grouped by research

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<sup>19</sup> A copy of the approved script for this thesis is attached in Appendix C.

<sup>20</sup> "Such a theory fits empirical situations, and is understandable to sociologists and laymen alike. Most important, it works—provides us with relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1).

question in the results section.<sup>21</sup> The results drawn from these theoretical concepts and themes are reported in the following section.

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<sup>21</sup> This is my interpretation. According to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), a drawback of qualitative interviewing is that data can be interpreted differently. After reviewing the data I believe these eight themes stood out from the ten interviews, which took roughly 318 minutes in total to conduct.

## 5. Results

After conducting the interviews for this project I analyzed transcripts for common themes or running commentary among the ten conversations I had regarding immigration reform.<sup>22</sup> After coding them, I grouped these themes in sections according to the research question they addressed.

### 5.1 Have Hispanic civil rights groups reacted to the pending immigration reform bills?

Immigration is certainly a “lightning rod” policy among Hispanic communities. From the literature it is clear that individuals are often provoked to join groups because of focusing events that drive their personal interest. The first research question addresses whether immigration reform is this type of event. From the responses in this thesis I believe that we will see that the

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<sup>22</sup> During the interview process themes developed among the responses from the ten subjects. To coordinate these results I examined each interview after it was completed and coded specific answers or responses in the themes listed as the sub-sections in Chapter Five.

current battle and the previous battle, mainly in Arizona, against unfair immigration reform will prove to be an event that will promote increased activity in the Hispanic community.

First it is important to look at how national Hispanic advocacy groups were active in driving resistance in Arizona and how they have used immigration reform. The results of the protest in Arizona pushed national groups to change their focus from that of an umbrella organization to one working more with state affiliate organizations and reaching out to individual members of the community. Over the past year, national groups have made immigration reform a high priority and have experienced interesting trends.

The first of these is that immigration reform is the type of issue that can galvanize a community of individuals. NCLR has found that immigration reform has a strong effect on a large majority of both illegal and legal immigrants. This point contradicts a stereotype that immigration reform is an issue only for illegal immigrants seeking to evade deportation. Legal immigrants often take up the fight for relatives or friends who they feel will be wrongly persecuted by unjust immigration laws.

This is the concern in Texas, where immigration reform is not a novel issue. For many Hispanics it has been the most important policy/political issue over the past three decades (Texas LULAC representative, 2011). With votes pending on a number of immigration-related policies, the reaction from

the Hispanic community has been strong and in some cases fearful. While those reactions may seem contradictory, based on the interviews conducted I believe that recent events, both the introduction of these bills and the recent happenings in Arizona, have empowered the Hispanic community to rally and show force. Yet, according to my conversations, this response may stem from fear of reprisal from an unfair law.

An interesting point is that because of SB 1070—a subject that was raised voluntarily throughout the conversations—and the new bills, the Hispanic community and their representatives finally have to take a collective look at what they would like and how they want to mobilize at the state level. That has drawn out a sense of community and shown that from a grievance point of view (deLeon, 1983), groups that demonstrate the ability to organize and that provide results can effect change in political and social consciousness within a minority community.

A good place to start to examine how Texans are reacting is to look back at the reaction to Arizona SB 1070, as all of the interviewees identified that activity as having some level of influence on the pending action. Each respondent alluded to “past activity” or the “policy in Arizona” during their responses to the scripted questions. Their responses prompted me to ask questions about the legislation, and while the importance or relevance of the demonstrations in Arizona varied, every respondent mentioned some version

of what the FEIL representative told me: "What happened out West will have a major effect on what happens in other immigration battles" (FEIL representative, 2011).

While all ten agreed that it is impossible for the activity in Arizona not to have an effect on how groups in Texas will plan their response, they were not sure how effective their tactics would be. The HADAS representative pointed out that while the action in Arizona will help, there are different factors and political cultures in Texas and Arizona. Throughout that interview the representative said that Texas was a unique case because of the population and current politicians.

A general theme among those interviewed is that Arizona provided an issue with which groups could approach the community and garner attention, something that advocacy groups struggle to obtain. Arizona SB 1070 not only had the effect of increasing membership in advocacy groups in Texas, but it showed the power that such groups can wield in the policy process even after a policy progresses past the initial stages.

The representative from Texas LULAC made the point that the activity in Arizona set a positive standard for Hispanic groups nationwide: "The work done in Arizona provided a battle plan for groups around the nation. Their ability to rally groups on both the local and national level showed that groups can take big-time action" (Texas LULAC representative, 2011). He said also

that a battle his group fights is proving that groups can be effective in policy initiation. His comments throughout our conversations suggested that having Arizona as a positive example of Hispanic activism gives local groups evidence to show apathetic members of the public that their activity will matter. This is an issue that advocacy organizations grapple with: "Our biggest problem among our community is getting our members to understand they can make a difference. Many come from low-income backgrounds and don't feel they can make that difference. Arizona provides evidence otherwise" (Texas LULAC representative, 2011).

While the reaction to SB 1070 can provide a blueprint, three of the interviewees were quick to point out that the same plan of attack may not work in Texas. The representative of America Para Todos was adamant that while the group can look to Arizona as an example, to insist that the activity there would be a "blueprint" would be going too far.

There are too many things in Texas that are different. We have a different political and social landscape here. Plus politicians saw what happened there also and those who want to push legislation through here can learn from the mistakes in the writing of the policy and in the public activity from their counterparts (America Para Todos representative, 2011).

There are a number of factors at work in framing the opportunity that immigration reform presents for advocacy organizations in Texas. The

HADAS representative alluded to the differences in the political landscapes of Texas and Arizona. In subsequent responses she said that tactics that worked in Arizona would not, on the whole, work in Texas. She felt the relationship between the Hispanic population and policy-makers in Texas was much more strained and that the connection between "their" public and the policy makers had a "big gap" to cross. While this notion was not expressly corroborated by other respondents, it raises the interesting point that a grievance, by itself, is not enough to cause groups to mobilize. Sociological and political factors also influence mobilization.

An aspect of immigration reform that repeatedly arose in my conversations with these advocacy group leaders was the misconception that Hispanics are against immigration. Seven respondents made it clear that Hispanics are in favor of fair immigration reform that protects the rights of legal immigrants while restricting access for illegal immigrants. The representative of Texas LULAC spoke at length against the stereotype that Hispanics favor legislation that reduces the criminal element of immigration law, and said that a majority of Hispanics involved with his organization are against immigrants who circumvent the tax and public service system.

A general concern among those interviewed is that mainstream America feels that Hispanics are unanimously opposed to immigration reform. As one local representative notes,

People in this country find it hard to differentiate between immigrants who are here to make an honest living and those here to do badly. A majority of immigrants simply want to come to America and work but, unfortunately, get lumped together with the negative element (Texas LULAC representative, 2011).

NALEO's representative spoke to the fact that this misconception affects how elected officials approach the issue. NALEO represents the interests of both its member organizations and Latino elected officials nationwide. In many cases elected officials pressured by their non-Hispanic constituents to vote for unjust immigration reform legislation based on this generalization.

The most common point made by the local group representatives is the desire for immigration reform to include a path to citizenship. Six of the ten organization leaders interviewed stated that this was a concern of their organization, and they believed it was a chief concern of the movement to defeat unfair immigration reform in Texas. They feel that legislation such as Arizona SB 1070 and the upcoming Texas legislation lacked a way for current immigrants to become citizens.

Most [Hispanics] just want to live here without the fear that they will be deported. But to go through that process, the time and money involved, is just unrealistic. They can't afford it and would rather simply live the way they are now (HADAS representative, 2011).

This representative went on to say that she felt that if immigration reform provided an obtainable path to citizenship, a large percentage of her community would support immigration reform. Getting this support from the organization's membership and community is integral for an advocacy group to be successful in influencing policy at any stage. Policy-makers, first and foremost, are looking to create policy that meets the needs of their public. The question is, whom is immigration reform being geared to? Are policy-makers looking to satisfy the Hispanic community or others? This is a question that will be answered once decisions on the final versions of the policies are made.

HCAFL-CIO works with Hispanic labor groups and pushes for just immigration reform at the local level. The group's representative was adamant that if the government provided a legitimate, feasible path to citizenship, the workers he has encountered would be eager for the chance. "If they did that, then the government could finally find out who wanted to be here legally and illegally. Seems like a better starting point if you ask me" (HCAFL-CIO representative, 2011).

After discussing this subject, each interviewee was asked why it is important. The responses had a common theme: to show that Hispanics are capable of identifying policies that benefit the public as a whole. When pushed, three of the interviewees added that Hispanics, whether

undocumented immigrants, documented immigrants, or citizens, feel a connection to the United States and are in favor of policies they feel better the nation.

All of those interviewed agreed that organizational cooperation was the best way to address the issue of immigration reform. Texas LULAC' representative said explicitly that the organization is reaching out to other groups around the state for one reason: to have a bigger influence in Austin. "We need to be able to talk as one solid block against this reform if we hope to defeat, which means more talking with each other as much as with elected officials" (Texas LULAC representative, 2011).

Eight respondents who mentioned communication and cooperation said that increasing their political power in the state of Texas would be easier if there were a unified voice. According to three of the respondents, there are a number of groups or coalitions lobbying to effect change in the current bills. It is clear from the concerns presented that it would behoove these coalitions to organize into one bloc with one unified message. The literature indicates that groups that have strong representation have the best ability to effect change. The goal of coordinating is in line with this theory.

5.2 If there is a reaction, do these advocacy groups use pending immigration reform bills to mobilize the Hispanic community to influence the policy process?

Now that we have established that immigration reform is a triggering event, it is important to understand how these groups can use reform to mobilize the community. Throughout history there have been issues that have caused increased activism. Determining if the current battle over immigration reform is such an issue is important in predicting whether groups will be able to use this issue to recruit new members or encourage activity from their membership.

When asked about the effect of immigration reform on the level of Hispanic advocacy, eight of the ten respondents said that the current battle for fair reform is a rallying point for the Hispanic community and advocacy groups across the nation.<sup>23</sup> However, all three respondents from national organizations were quick to point out that immigration has been a persistent issue throughout history. These groups have seen an increase in activism each time immigration reform has emerged as an issue.

Another point made by representatives of NCLR and NALEO is that Hispanics are active in political matters in general, and while certain issues

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<sup>23</sup> The two remaining respondents felt that while the reform battle is important, it is not a rallying cry. These interviewees felt that other issues as well as past immigration battles neutralize the novelty factor they feel is required for an issue to act as a rallying point.

can provoke a greater response, immigration is not the only concern that causes Hispanics to become active in policy matters. According to the literature, questions concerning the finer points of Hispanic activism persist.

Each group acknowledges being able to speak only on behalf of its community, but their representatives felt strongly that Hispanic activism is not issue-dependent. “I don’t feel that immigration reform is any different than much of the work we’ve done here.<sup>24</sup> We see activism at the local levels with our organizations that shows that our community is active on a number of issues” (NCLR representative, 2011)<sup>25</sup>.

While the impact of immigration reform is up for debate, four of the local groups that participated in this study specifically acknowledged that the threat of strict immigration reform has caused their membership numbers to rise. More individuals in their target communities are participating as immigration reform has become more high-profile in the past year.

Our members are worried about immigration reform. They are showing up to meetings more and bringing people with them. The issue is that we can’t always count on their continued participation. But we’ve seen more and more people come out and when I speak to them immigration is a big worry (HADAS representative, 2011).

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<sup>24</sup> The respondent offered to share statistics to support this, but they were never forwarded to the researcher.

<sup>25</sup> I chose to interview national representative because they play a role, especially at the organizing level, in local reform battles. Their opinions provide a necessary big-picture point of view, but it did seem that they were very guarded about singling out immigration reform as a special case.

The HADAS representative's major concern was that immigration reform would make it harder for the group's members to earn a living in the United States. As organization leaders suggest, immigration reform has been responsible for bringing new members into these groups because many people associate calls for reform with unjust and unfair laws that will be applied to all Hispanics. "Our members' concern is that they're not immigrants but they're worried that they'll be treated like criminals or border jumpers if they run a stop sign" (Texas LULAC representative, 2011).

These worries provide a way for organizations to frame the issue, and can also offer the opportunity to use such fears as a focusing event to increase their audience and demonstrate to their members the organization's plans and scope of influence. The ability of organizations to frame the issue on the local level is vital to their success. "Sure it helps to show that we can make a difference. That's why people join our group" (America Para Todos representative, 2011).

Despite the contention from the NCLR and NALEO representatives that the current round of immigration reform is not the first in history, this does not lessen the degree to which the issue can be used by organizations to promote increased activism. The response from local representatives provides preliminary evidence that grievances such as these have the ability

to mobilize and publicize agenda-setting Hispanic organizations. This theme also offers evidence that immigration reform or contentious policies regarding the Hispanic community can increase Hispanic activism on the whole, a question that might be examined in a future project.

The most diverse group of answers came in response to questions about how immigration reform activity has affected membership and how the groups can sustain those new relationships. Eight of ten respondents believed their groups saw a significant rise in membership and fundraising as a result of the immigration issue in Arizona and pending immigration issues in Texas. All of the local groups said that of recent new members, a “large majority” list immigration reform as an important issue.

While groups are working to provide a voice to their communities in the fight for immigration reform, they do see the issue as an opportunity. The high-profile nature of the legislation brings with it a chance to reach a segment of the community that they may otherwise not. Gaining this kind of additional access to this community is vital to a grassroots organization’s survival as it can mean increased membership and contributions.

HADAS alluded to this fact in our interview, indicating that willingness to participate with the group rose as the issue of immigration reform became more mainstream. Now the group is active in a community with a wider audience. While working for immigration reform is its main goal, the group

hopes to use the attention to promote HADAS and build membership and power on other policy issues as well.

Its profile as a political advocacy group is also a result of its work on a high-profile policy; NADAS has gained access to elected officials and lobbying groups. Building such a profile can help smaller advocacy groups survive and maintain their place as the connection between elected officials and the community.

The Texas LULAC organization has seen an increase in their activity since the Texas immigration legislation has been on the agenda. It was clear in my conversation with the Texas LULAC representative that the organization is looking to further educate the Hispanic community. Texas LULAC functions as a legal representative for its membership, and has taken up the mantle of providing a bridge between the Hispanics in Texas and their government.

That membership is growing with the rise of immigration reform. “Immigration reform is a rallying point for Hispanics in the state of Texas” (Texas LULAC representative). “The happenings in Arizona spurred the interest, and in some cases fear, that the state could adopt similar legislation and I think that makes them want to act.”

The national groups have also seen a significant rise in activism. NCLR saw about an 18% increase in responses to action alerts, which it feels

is very significant.<sup>26</sup> Both NCLR and NALEO stated that immigration reform has risen on the political agendas of their member organizations in those states where reform is being discussed by the state legislature. NALEO believes that immigration reform had a significant impact on state and federal elections in Nevada, Arizona, and Maryland.

When asked if this level of activism can be maintained, the general consensus—agreed to by six of the ten respondents—was that they did not believe so. While the interest in immigration reform would likely result in some new permanent members, these subjects felt that membership spikes surrounding any one issue were temporary.

However, eight of the ten believe it is useful for the sake of their organization's future to get their foot in the door with these community members. Building a relationship with any segment of the community is vital to local group survival. While these individuals may not take part in every policy debate, the general feeling was that having built a relationship would provide more power for advocacy groups when speaking to elected officials about policy development.

While there was no consensus on how these groups can retain new members, group representatives believed that although Hispanic activists

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<sup>26</sup> The representative did not have exact statistics readily available, and she did not believe a study had been done on this specific question. Her response was based on the group's ongoing study of immigration reform and membership. However, NCLR is working on providing a precise answer to this question.

may not continue their involvement after immigration reform concludes, immigration reform is unlikely to end anytime soon, and therefore there is really no need to develop a plan to deal with declining membership. From their perspective, immigration reform has the potential to become a perennial issue as long as crime and the importing of drugs from south of the U.S. border are a major concern.

Politicians are unlikely to relinquish an issue that their target public is passionate about. Also, they do not need a bill to pass in order to propose it; they just need to show that they are taking steps to address immigration. As long as this is the case, immigration reform and the battle to ensure that it is comprehensive and fair will exist.

These advocacy groups are attempting to increase their role in the policy process in Texas to change or strike down pending immigration legislation they feel is unjust. Therefore they are lobbying and banding together, mobilizing their resources and improving their affiliations with decision-makers to gain traction in the state's policy process.

### 5.3 Current tactics

The transcripts of these interviews reveal that these groups use a number of common tactics and types of action to positively influence upcoming policy. These organizations are seeking both to have their stance on immigration reform shape the policy agenda and to bring about a change in the types of legislation being proposed for the upcoming legislative session.

Public demonstrations at the state and local levels were mentioned by nine of the ten groups surveyed. These groups are organizing these demonstrations in their cities and are traveling to Austin to gain an audience with state policy-makers. They feel that this kind of power is the most effective tool with which to accomplish their goal of making positive change. As the representative from HADAS stated, the number of Hispanics in the state of Texas provides a unique opportunity to use public demonstrations as a policy tool. The literature on policy-making and advocacy groups shows that resources are important for advocacy organizations to improve their place in the policy process. One resource that all of these groups have is a large membership base.

Another tactic mentioned was coalition building, which is another example of ways in which the happenings in Arizona has played a role in configuring the development of action plans in Texas. After seeing the type of mobilization that was achieved in Arizona and around the nation by groups

working together, those surveyed believed that building strong relationships in the state of Texas between organizations is important to voicing the concerns of Hispanics regarding immigration reform. Discussion did not include specifics of how these coalitions are being built, but this tactic is one that these groups are intent on using. The mass mobilizations and demonstrations in Austin have served as an opportunity for these groups to build their networks and continue to show a united front. Another avenue for these coalitions to grow is through national organizations. The representative of NCLR mentioned that the group's network of member organizations is reaching out to others in their community and taking part in the state demonstrations. These similar organizations are looking for others to join them in their fight.

Education was unanimously mentioned as a tool for advocacy groups to gain and increase advocacy activity. According to Texas LULAC' representative, the issue for many Hispanics is their lack of understanding of the specifics of the proposed immigration reform. As we see in the policy-making literature this is a gap in policy process that advocacy organizations can fill. By acting as policy and issue experts, these advocacy groups can work to provide positive and accurate representations of proposed and upcoming legislation. This is where national or umbrella organizations can have the most impact. All three national groups surveyed said that their

biggest role in the fight against unfair immigration reform at the state level is to provide their local members and organizations with accurate information, which gives individuals who may be reluctant the tools to promote advocacy, and as a result, aids in increasing membership. This information is helpful as local groups conduct meetings to educate Hispanics about what is involved in the legislation and about how to get involved in the fight against unfair immigration reform.

Finally, and most importantly, gaining an audience with elected officials and policy-makers is the main goal. Through the tactics mentioned in this section, these organizations focus on meeting with elected officials to promote their viewpoint. Building resources though increased membership, power, and funds will mean getting an attentive audience with those in power.

#### 5.4 What are the types of action plans regarding immigration reform?

After surveying the current tactics these groups are using to address immigration reform, to consider the third research question I will outline some of the responses the groups gave regarding their plans for future advocacy. As stated above, each group interviewed for this thesis has connections to the state of Texas. All ten respondents felt that a battle is upcoming similar to that seen in Arizona. Four local groups said that they foresee a similar reaction from the Hispanic community regarding protest and public activism.

Each local group felt that the issue in Texas could be the most important battle nationwide, given the rising number of immigrants entering the state.

The battle to secure the Texas border against drug importers was mentioned by five respondents as a point of worry. It is reasonable to assume that immigration reform may be seen as a way to stem the wave of drugs and violence moving back and forth across Texas' southern border. HADAS felt that in the absence of criminal legislation, immigration reform at the state level could be perceived as a protective measure and a way to curb the problems at the border. This is a valid concern that many Hispanic groups should be considering.

The result of this is that these local groups are attempting to educate the community in order to put pressure on their elected officials to realize that immigration reform is not criminal reform. The continued use of public demonstrations is vital. In our discussions the four groups that specifically mentioned the tactic alluded to the impact of a visual presence, implying that having a visual spectacle that people could see on the internet and on television aided support during the fight against reform. This is one of the tactics that local groups are looking to utilize through coalitions and demonstration coordination. "On any issue it helps to see that other people share your point of view. In any community it aids those who are

apprehensive about joining public demonstration feel at ease when they see people fighting the cause. It instills confidence" (NCLR representative, 2011).

It is clear that these organizations feel their power lies in their ability to show strength against immigration reform and to pressure elected officials. Local groups in the state of Texas are following Arizona's lead in organizing with each other. They are developing new partnerships among organizations and want to bring in any ally, whether political and social, including labor groups, human rights groups, or politically motivated groups. Regardless of group size, each of those interviewed had sent a representative to Austin to lobby for the group and community. Also, all the groups had a person working on tracking immigration reform, as either a volunteer or an employee.

The groups plan to work with national organizations to increase their political power, something that is integral to obtaining access to policy initiation, the stage that Texas is currently in. The local groups may not, and in most cases do not, have the political clout to maximize their voices.

It's clear that elected officials can blow us off one by one. We have come together and that's why I've been going to rallies with and for my group to make a united front. But it's also why we became an affiliate member [of a national organization]. We want to be able to make our voice heard (Texas LULAC representative, 2011).

To accomplish this, national groups can provide guidance to local and state groups when called upon. The dynamic between the two levels on

immigration reform has been interesting. Each national organization leader expressed that their organization was engaging in local politics only when asked by either their local chapters/member organizations or elected officials.

The representative from NALEO mentioned specifically that the group reached out to elected officials and their member organizations but would not take a more involved role unless asked. The representatives from NCLR and LULAC made similar statements.

While the national groups made it clear that their presence on the local level was not high-profile, the local groups emphasized that they can lean on their parent organizations, whichever they may be, to provide information and guidance on how to address immigration reform. Thus, for local groups one strategy is to draw upon national organizations to help influence policy.

The end result is a relationship between two levels, one in which the goals may be different and the weight of influence can fluctuate, but one that both sides feel is valuable to advancing the fight against what they feel is unjust immigration reform. All three national organizations indicated that they provide information for local groups regarding recruiting strategies and policy.

Table 5.1 provides details of the major themes and how these groups responded when asked about them. The response “no answer” means that the respondent did not give a clear answer or failed to answer the question completely.

Table 5.1: Breakdown of responses

Organization	Arizona SB 1070 will have an impact on Texas reform?	Battle in Texas will be similar to Arizona?	Immigration reform as a rallying point?	Immigration resulting in rise in membership?	Retaining level of activism associated with immigration reform?	Immigration reform opens avenues to possible future advocacy?
Harris County AFL-CIO	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No Answer	No
America Para Todos	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Asociacion Salvadorena de los EUA	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
FIEL	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HADAS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement – Houston, TX	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
LULAC – Texas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
National Alliance of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Table 5.1 (Cont.)

Organization	In favor of fair immigration reform	Advocating coalition building	Coalitions will lead to increased power?	Public demonstrations are effective?	Educating the Hispanic population is a top priority?	Importance of path to citizenship
<i>Harris County AFL-CIO</i>	No answer	Yes	No	No answer	Yes	No
<i>America Para Todos</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Asociacion Salvadorena de los EUA</i>	No answer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>FIEL</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>HADAS</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>Labor Council for Latin American Advancement – Houston, TX</i>	No answer	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
<i>League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>LULAC – Texas</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>National Alliance of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No answer
<i>National Council of La Raza (NCLR)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No answer

## 5.5 Summarizing results

For local groups, having an umbrella organization to guide them, recommend best practices, and share expertise, is of great value. One organization leader admitted that without their national group they wouldn't have all the information they need to provide their community.

I do not contend that the tactics discussed above represent a final list or course of action for these groups, but they do address research question three of this thesis, and can be considered a unified plan to address immigration reform in the state of Texas. A number of other tactics were mentioned, including staging protests, walkouts by manual laborers, and boycotts, but none of these activities was confirmed as having taken place.

Examining these responses provides a snapshot of how the ten organizations perceive and are addressing the upcoming immigration reform battle. From the interviews conducted in this study it is clear to me that immigration reform in Texas is an important battle for promoting and maintaining Hispanic advocacy. It is also clear that the happenings in Arizona will play a role in how these organizations proceed in the fight for fair immigration reform. Based on these conversations, I believe that Arizona provided a new model for these organizations to use when answering the questions posed to them. With the consequences of that movement still fresh

in their minds, this is understandable. From the results of this research we can derive that immigration reform in Texas is being addressed early in the policy innovation and agenda-setting process. The current tactics and potential future tactics outlined in this thesis offer a glimpse of what the future battle over immigration reform could hold for Hispanic advocacy groups and their ability to increase individual activism.

## 6. Conclusion

This thesis provides a window on the current battle for fair immigration reform in the state of Texas. A survey of a small but diverse set of advocacy groups allows us to view the issue from a few different perspectives. While this research has some shortcomings I believe that this thesis provides evidence of the current state of advocacy activity in Texas regarding an issue that is increasing in importance and that will have significant potential consequences for Hispanics in Texas.

### 6.1 What we learned

Of the three research questions in this thesis, the most significant is the first one, regarding Hispanic groups' recognition of immigration reform. From their responses it is clear that the Hispanic advocacy groups surveyed are well aware of the potential impact and the potential dangers of the

immigration reform bills currently being proposed in Texas. These groups are ready and willing to play an active role in the early agenda-setting and policy innovation stages of the policy process.

The groups are currently taking significant action to address the issue, including lobbying, protests, and education campaigns. They are well aware of the ramifications of inaction and want to play an early and vital role in the policy process regarding immigration reform.

Although it is obvious that these groups are taking action against immigration reform, the answers to research questions two and three are not as easy to interpret. Question two deals with the impact that immigration reform has on the membership and resources of these groups. The responses reveal that immigration reform is a focusing event. The issue carries significant weight in the Hispanic community and is one that Hispanics will rally around. What is less clear is whether the interest will persist once the battle over immigration reform has concluded. There are two sides to this question. As one respondent points out, immigration reform in Texas is not an issue that is likely to be solved, rendering the question less important than it would otherwise be. However, on a larger scale it is important to examine whether these groups can retain these members, and if so, how. Another viewpoint is that immigration reform is not the only issue of importance to the Hispanic community. While the issue is a critical one and does prompt

Hispanics to get involved, it is not the only issue that does so. If these individuals retreat back into political apathy, it is reasonable to assume that others will take their place. To summarize, immigration reform does act as a unifying event but the long-term commitment of those motivated to act is in question.

Lastly, the responses to research question three, regarding the type of action plans being developed, is at a speculative stage, as the nature of the question makes it difficult to provide a concrete answer. Therefore, I will offer a few notes on what we can expect. The most important finding here is that high priorities for these groups include coalition-building and increasing their stature in the policy process. This shows that the groups understand that to improve their influence on the policy process they must increase their size and resources and build coalitions that allows the groups to increase their power. An increase in numbers and power will allow these groups to play a larger role in the process of deciding what immigration reform will look like in the state of Texas.

## 6.2 The role of Arizona SB 1070

An unexpected set of results that surfaced in this study was the impact of the reaction to Arizona SB 1070 on future immigration reform advocacy.

The respondents felt strongly that the then-recent fight unfair immigration reform was both a demonstration of how successful advocacy groups can be in changing or altering the impact of policy and a blueprint these groups can use to develop future strategies.

Speculating on why that particular movement was important leads me to believe that the timing of the interviews for this thesis and the results of that movement were important in influencing the subjects' responses. One point made during the discussions and in the literature is that groups, especially smaller ones, struggle to find tangible success stories with which to build their name and reputation in the community. Without this, gaining new members can be a challenge. I believe that the high-profile nature of the battle in Arizona and the success of tactics such as coalition building and public demonstrations, as well as mass media coverage of these activities, have provided the groups in this thesis with an example of the impact these groups can make on the policy process.

One observation made about the fight in Arizona and the potential fight in Texas is that legislators will look to the activity in Arizona as an example as

well. In an attempt to avoid the national political issues that Arizona faced, Texas legislators may be quicker to grant activist groups an audience. Because the Texas groups are getting started extremely early in the process and their membership is already increasing, this could be the residual change from Arizona that has the greatest effect on the upcoming discussion over immigration reform in Texas.

### 6.3 Weakness of the study

This thesis uses qualitative analysis to examine the reaction of Hispanic advocacy organizations to the current battle over immigration reform in the state of Texas. As detailed in chapter four, the methods used to collect data for this study were based on semi-structured interviews with executives and key personnel at randomly selected advocacy organizations operating in the state. The detailed findings in this thesis are listed in chapters five and six. However, there are limitations to the research and methodology, which I will detail in this section.

One weakness of the study is the limited number of advocacy organizations that responded to my inquiries. Of the 22 organizations selected only 10 chose to participate, which is less than the accepted 68 percent participation rate (Johnson, 2003). The lack of participation can be interpreted because a fear of misrepresentation of the advocacy group or a

lack of trust in me as the researcher. In either case, a participation rate of only 45% renders the results inconclusive and can be seen as only a partial representation of the general views toward the response to and results of immigration reform.

Another aspect of the study that is suspect is the use of qualitative analysis. While I stand by my choice to use this methodology, the open-ended questioning allows for gaps in information and opens avenues for respondents to misrepresent certain things and attempt to steer or skew the results in a preferred direction. Although a script was used, the interviews flowed in several directions and at times the respondents used questions to promote personal or organizational motives that were not pertinent to immigration reform or this study.

With such varied responses, coding was an issue. Certain aspects touched on by a minority of respondents were important but were not corroborated by other respondents. In this study I presented those results but made it clear that the views of that person or organization were not volunteered by other respondents.

These weaknesses do not discount the study, in this researcher's opinion but they do suggest a need to conduct further studies. As this research takes place and the viewpoints of organizations and the opinions of their key individuals are discovered, studies should focus on collecting

quantitative data to determine if political opportunity theory is in fact a useful framework for analyzing the actions of these groups. Gathering evidence from these groups, their members, and policy-makers will provide a more accurate representation of how the groups are reacting to immigration reform issues in Texas.

#### 6.4 What is the next step?

Future research can expand on that provided in this thesis. In this study we have found that there is an influential role for these groups to play in the policy process. A retrospective study after the legislation is finalized would be useful, along with a study examining the methodology and motivations from the policy-maker point of view. The ultimate drawback of this thesis is that it is unclear whether immigration reform represents an isolated incident of increased activism. The fight in Arizona could skew the results of this thesis by provoking distorted responses.

However, I believe this thesis provides a valuable look at Hispanic advocacy groups' level of influence and provides a glimpse of their potential action plans for addressing immigration reform in Texas. Also, it provides a basis of study of these Hispanic groups and how they validate the role of advocacy groups in the frameworks of public policy and political opportunity theory.

## 6.5. Implications of the study and summary

This thesis provides evidence that Hispanic groups understand the role they can play in the policy process. Also, it suggests that these groups, with the help of outside events and examples, have taken action and are developing a strategy to impact Texas' policy process regarding immigration reform. The responses in this study show that the civil rights groups surveyed are aware of the impact that immigration reform can have on their power in the policy process.

If these groups are successful in maintaining the momentum begun in Arizona and building on the publicity immigration reform can bring with regard to building membership, the groups have an opportunity to gain leverage in the policy process. This thesis suggests that these groups should concentrate on developing resources and membership in a way that increases their standing in the policy process, in order to make inroads with policy-makers in a bottom-up relationship. The best way to do that would be to work from their station downward, as information providers and educators on immigration reform and as a rallying point for Hispanics concerned about the impact of unfair reform.

In conclusion, I believe the work done on this thesis provides a view into the mindset of a sample of Texas' Hispanic activist culture. The results of

this thesis show that these groups understand the unique situation they are facing with immigration reform and how this discussion and battle could impact their role in the policy process, as well as the toll that failure could take on their base communities. It is clear from this study that these groups are actively seeking ways to show a unified front against what they characterize as unfair immigration reform.

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**APPENDIX A: May 2010 Gallup Poll Data (Saad, 2010,  
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/141113/americans-closely-divided-immigration-reform-priority.aspx>)**

**Title: Americans Closely Divided Over Immigration Reform**

***Immigration Priority***

If you had to choose, what should be the main focus of the U.S. government in dealing with the issue of illegal immigration -- (1) developing a plan for halting the flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S., or (2) developing a plan to deal with immigrants who are currently in the U.S. illegally? <sup>2</sup>

	<b>Halting flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S.</b>	<b>Developing a plan to deal with immigrants now in U.S. illegally</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2010 Jun 11-13	59	35	5
2006 May 5-7	52	43	1

GALLUP

### *Impact of Illegal Immigrants on Taxes*

Which comes closer to your point-of-view -- [illegal immigrants in the long run be other productive citizens and pay their full share of taxes, or illegal immigrants cost the taxpayers too much by using government services like public education and medical services?]

	<b>Pay fair share of taxes</b>	<b>Cost taxpayers too much</b>	<b>Other/ No opinion</b>
	%	%	%
2010 Jun 11-13	32	62	7
2008 Jun 5-6	31	63	6
2006 Jun 8-25	29	66	4

via LUP

APPENDIX B: June 2010 Gallup Poll (Saad, 2010,

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/127649/americans-value-aspects-immigration-reform.aspx>)

**Title: Americans Value Both Aspects of Immigration Reform**

*Importance of Immigration Policy Goals*

How important is it to you that the government takes steps this year to deal with each of the following -- extremely important, very important, moderately important, or not that important?

	<b>Extremely important</b> %	<b>Very important</b> %	<b>Moderately important</b> %	<b>Not that important</b> %
Controlling U.S. borders to halt the flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S.	42	26	22	10
Developing a plan to deal with the large number of illegal immigrants who are already living in the U.S.	36	31	23	10

USA Today/Gallup, May 1-2, 2010

GALLUP

*Worry About Effects of Illegal Immigrants and Anti-Illegal Immigration Laws*

	<b>% Very concerned</b>
How concerned are you about each of the following ...	
Illegal immigrants might be putting an unfair burden on U.S. schools, hospitals, and government services	61
Allowing illegal immigrants to stay in the U.S. might be encouraging others to move here illegally	55
Illegal immigrants making low wages might make U.S. employers less willing to pay American workers a decent wage	53
How concerned would you be if stricter new immigration laws were passed ...	
Illegal immigrants and their families who have lived in the U.S. peacefully and productively for many years would be forced to leave the country	45
Hispanics living in the U.S. would be harassed by authorities accusing them of being illegal immigrants	42
Taking strict measures against illegal immigrants would go against the American tradition of welcoming those who come to the U.S. to find a better life	34

USA Today/Gallup, May 1-2, 2010

... AMERICAN

## APPENDIX C: Script for interviews

### Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to this interview. My name is Darrell Lovell, the principal investigator of this study. I am an MPA candidate in the on-line Masters of Public Administration program in the School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado Denver. This study will serve as my thesis and will provide a vital look at the role of immigration reform, and by extension the possible role of policy issues, on the activity patterns among Hispanic advocacy groups.

Before we begin, I would like to make you aware of a few issues. First, you will be afforded complete anonymity in the reporting of this study. All information will be coded for use and password protected to preserve your personal and professional interest. Second, I would like to record this interview. This study does not require written consent, per Colorado Institutional Review Board (COIRB) guidelines, but I do need verbal approval to record this interview. At this point I ask you to say yes if you agree to have this interview recorded and no if you do not want to be recorded.

Now I will ask a series of questions concerning the \_\_\_\_\_ advocacy group. Please answer candidly and feel free to ask any questions you feel are necessary. This process will work best if this is more of a dialogue instead of a question and answer session. If at any time for any reason you wish to stop or postpone the interview let me know and we can make necessary arrangements.

## Questions

1. Are you aware of the basic issues of immigration reform?
2. How important do you feel the issue of immigration reform is to the Hispanic community as a whole?
3. Is immigration reform an issue of importance for your organization?
4. Has your organization spoken out officially on the issue of immigration reform?
5. Is your organization for or against immigration reform?
6. Do you feel immigration reform is a divisive issue for the Hispanic community?
7. Do you believe immigration reform will drive more Hispanics to be politically active?
8. Do you think your organization does/can use the attention from immigration reform to recruit more members?
9. Do you think your organization does/can use the attention from immigration reform to generate more interest or raise its public profile?
10. If so, do you believe this is an effective strategy?
11. Do you believe there is controversy surrounding immigration reform?
12. If so, does the controversy surrounding immigration reform serve as a positive for organizations to improve membership, recruiting, and/or funding?
13. Are there any other issues in addition to immigration reform that can provide a boost to Hispanic political advocacy?

**14. Are there any other comments you would like to add about your group's activity or the effects of immigration reform?**

Thank you for your time. I believe the information will be vital to answering the questions proposed in this study.